

How brands make a killing out of human indifference

While there are many secrets of building brands, the most important among them is deeply rooted in human behaviour.

Brands absolutely depend on us to not do anything about real issues. Surprised? Here's why.

Apathy and its friends

Apathy develops towards issues people believe are beyond their control. Have you ever applied for a visa to Africa? You will have to pay a huge bribe to get your yellow fever certificate, but the holiday is too inviting. So we give in quietly when no one is watching.

Personal apathy: No mother in the world wants her child to watch excessive TV or play on smartphones. But when it's late night movie time with the husband, a compromise is reached — TV and smartphones win. Your child knows this too.

Apathy is the natural response when you want to ignore the problem at hand. So far, so good.

How does it build brands

Let's start small. Who's your child's tuition teacher? The famous one — yes, the one all the toppers go to. And how does the teacher take his fee? It's a substantial amount,

but does this teacher pay taxes? This is where apathy begins, with submission to the system to safeguard your own interests. Moving on to bigger milieus. Ever attended a 'Save The Girl Child' fashion show? This is the oldest trick in the book — connect your brand to "social good".



The designer, sponsors and attendees, all are complicit partners where no one gets harmed, but no 'girl child' benefits; instead, poor girls walk the ramp.

Brands that sell you "farm-fresh" chicken don't tell you that all the hens were kept in small spaces, were fed several antibiotics and in general, treated cruelly. As the host of a gala dinner, would you rather have your guests enjoy the butter chicken or discuss the inhuman plight of hens?

Politics of the brand

Brand politics counts on our apathy to not vote. We can have arm-chair discussions, aggressive arguments, debates and colloquia, but they depend on our mechanised indifference because "the issues are too large and complex".

Brands use labels such as 100 per cent natural, *shuddha*, new technology, etc. We believe them, but the brands depend on our apathy to not question them. Human indifference offers 'gaps' that brands can leverage.

On the flip side, if the brain and its evolution are reasons for our progress as a race, then apathy could be its antithesis. And

we need people who will stand up for what is right. Next time you see a revolutionary, give them the respect of rising above indifference.

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